

Haftarah - Parshat Va Yigash (Ezekiel 37:15-28)

based on the translations of

Robert Alter, Aryeh Kaplan, Stone Edition Tanach, JPS, Jerusalem Bible, New King James Bible

modeled after the recording in *Navigating the Bible II*:

<https://bible.ort.org/books/haftarotd4.asp?action=displaypage&book=1&chapter=37&verse=28&portion=12>

37:15 There came the word of YHWH to me, saying,

16 And you, [son of man], [take for yourself] some wood—[one stick]—and write [upon it], “For Judah and for the children of Israel [who are joined to him],” and take some wood—[one more stick]—and write [on the second stick], “For Joseph, the wood of Ephraim and the whole house of Israel [that is joined to him].”

17 Then bring them together—[bringing one stick] [close to the other], [making them for yourself] some wood [that is all of one piece]. They shall be united [in your hand].

18 When it happens [that they ask] of you—the sons of your people, saying, “Will you not tell us what this means to you?”,

19 then you [will answer them], “[These are the words that are spoken] [by my Lord] *Elohim* (YHWH): ‘[You are to understand],

‘I am about to take the wood that is Joseph, that is [in the hand of Ephraim] and the tribes of Israel [that are joined to him], [and I will then place] the stick together with [the stick of Judah], [so as to make them] into [one stick], and they will become one in my hand.”

20 Keep these pieces of wood—the sticks [of which you have been] [writing on them]—[in your hand], [before their eyes].

21 Then say [these words to them], “[This is what says] my Lord *Elohim*, ‘[You must know]: [I am going] to take the children of Israel from among the nations to which [they have gone]. [I will gather] them [from all around], and I will bring them [to their own land].

22 [I will make] [out of them] a nation—[one people]—in the land on the mountains of Israel,

[and there will be a king]: [only one king] there will be for them all, [as their king].

[They will no longer] be two separate nations. [They will not be] divided [any more] [into two kingdoms], ever.

23 [And they will not] defile [themselves any longer] [with their idols] [and their things] so abhorrent, [and with all] their transgressions.

[And I will] [rescue them] [in all of] their settlements of which [they have sinned] [within them].

[And I will] [cleanse them], [and they will be to Me] a people. [Then assuredly], I will be to them [a God].

37:24 My servant David will be king [over them]; a single shepherd [there will be] [for all of them].  
 My judgments [they will follow], My statutes they will observe, and they will practice them.  
 25 [They shall dwell] [in the land]—the land [that I gave] [to My servant] Jacob, of which there dwelt therein, your fathers.  
 [They shall dwell] [on that very land]—[not only they themselves], [but also their children] [and their children's] children forever,  
 and David My servant shall be prince over them, evermore.  
 26 [I will make] [with them] a covenant of peace: a covenant everlasting, there shall [be with them].  
 [I will emplace them] [And I will] [increase them], [and I will place] [My holy shrine] [in their midst], [for all time].  
 27 [Then will be] [My dwelling place] [with them], and I will be for them, a God. [They shall then be] for Me a people.  
 28 [And it shall be known] by the nations [that indeed] I am YHWH who sanctify Israel,  
 [when it is seen] [that My holy shrine] [end melody] [is among them], [throughout all the ages].

## Len Fellman's English readings with tropes

The purpose of this project is to translate *THE SONG OF THE TORAH* into English.

I work by comparing as many as ten English translations of a *pasuk* and creating a cantillated English sentence that sounds as much as possible like the Hebrew. They follow the Hebrew as closely as possible, word for word and trope by trope. The English language has an amazing flexibility, making it possible to make the English word order match that of the Hebrew quite well, allowing for some “poetic licence”, and some willingness on the part of the listener to be “carried” by the melody more than by the English syntax. The translation needs to sound good when *chanted*, but not necessarily when *spoken or read*.

Unlike most translations, these “transtropilations” are not intended to be a substitute for the Hebrew. On the contrary, they are meant to provide a “window” into the Hebrew text and its musical expression. My ideal listener knows enough Hebrew and has enough interest to follow the Hebrew in a bilingual text while the *leyner* is chanting the English version, to bring the Hebrew text to life, both *verbally* and *musically*. For this purpose I use *exactly* the same tropes in the English as in the Hebrew (almost always on the corresponding English word).

The texts can be used to do **consecutive translation**, i.e. leyning a phrase in Hebrew, followed by the corresponding phrase sung in English. Some of my recordings demonstrate this. I do this frequently when leyning for groups that either know little Hebrew, or that don't have a *chumash* in front of them.

I favor literal translations (e.g. “cut a covenant”) to call attention to Hebrew idioms, and towards simpler (even if less accurate) words (e.g. Ex. 12:7 “beam above the door” rather than “lintel”) to be easier to follow. If my readings provoke a discussion of the Hebrew, I consider that as justification for using less-than-idiomatic English. I try to find just the right balance between “literalness” and “listenable-ness”. A primary goal is throwing light on the Hebrew syntax.

In order to adapt the trope symbols to a left-to-right language like English, I *reversed* the direction of the trope symbols:

mercha tipcha munach tevir mapakh *or* yetiv kadma *or* pashta gersh gershayim telisha katana telisha gedola

(Generally speaking the *conjunctive tropes* such as mercha, munach, mapakh, kadma, and telisha katana “lean toward” the words they “conjoin” to, while the *disjunctive tropes* such as tipcha, gersh, gershayim, and telisha gedola “lean away” from the words that follow, so as to create a sense of separation.)

The trope symbol is normally placed under the accented syllable, unless it is a *pre-positive* accent (telisha gedola, placed *at the beginning* of the word or phrase) or a *post-positive* one (telisha katana or pashta, placed at the *end* of the word or phrase).

The Hebrew text frequently puts a *makkeph* (which is like a hyphen) between words in order to treat them as a single word to be chanted. I use a different system for English: If an entire English phrase is to be chanted to a single trope melody, I place it between grey brackets, as in this phrase from the Book of Lamentations:

[clings to her skirts]

The *leyner* is invited to fit this phrase to the *Eicha* “rivi'i” melody in whatever way seems most natural.

As a variant of the “grey bracket” device, I indicate pairs of tropes by “wrapping them around” the phrase which have the combined melody:

mercha/tipcha	kadma/geresh ( <i>or</i> : azla, etc.)	mercha siluk
(Renew our days)	(She weeps bitterly).	(a fire-offering to God)

Again, the *leyner* should decide on the most natural way to fit the phrase to the combined trope melody.

I put words in gray which I consider essential but which don’t strictly match the Hebrew. I also “pad” some phrases with extra words in gray to fill out a musical phrase nicely. Different trope systems vary widely in the length of the musical phrase used, so the words in gray may or not be used depending on the *leyner*’s cantillation system. In particular, the tropes *telisha g’dola* (ר), *legarmeh*, *metigah-zakef*, and *pazer* vary widely in the musical phrases used for chanting. (And please indulge me in my whimsical treatments of *shalshelet*.)

“*Metigah-zakef*” is a special trope combination which can be recognized by a kadma and a zakef katon appearing on the same Hebrew word (again, a *makkeph* makes two words into one). (There are several examples in Genesis 18 & 19, beginning with 18:16). I indicate this by placing the corresponding English phrase in grey brackets:

[Take heed—take care for yourself]

In some trope systems (viz. cantor Moshe Haschel in “Navigating the Bible II”) this is given a distinctive melody—I add extra syllables to fill out the musical phrase (as in “take care” in this example). Haschel’s system also chants the trope *munach* as *legarmeh* more often than other systems do.

I don’t write a single word of translation without first hearing the melody of the phrase in my mind, following one of two trope systems: The one by Portnoy and Wolff (*The Art of Cantillation*) or the one by Joshua R. Jacobson (*Chanting the Hebrew Bible*).

I transcribe the name יהוה as YHWH (in small caps). I almost always chant this as *yud-hey-vav-hey*, which I have discovered fits marvelously into several of the trope melodies. But of course the *leyner* can choose to pronounce it as “*God*” or “*Adonai*”.

Warning on the Hebrew text: The text I use for the English trope system is from Aryeh Kaplan; the Hebrew text I display is from Wikisource. Occasionally (but rarely) a phrase will use different tropes in the two systems.

*The English translations I mostly use (besides several scholarly commentaries) are the following:*

Aryeh Kaplan, ‘The Living Torah’ (1981) (also my source for proper names & transliterations)  
Richard Elliott Friedman, ‘The Bible With Sources Revealed’ (2003)  
Everett Fox, ‘The Five Books of Moses’ (1997)  
The Stone Edition ‘Tanach’ (1996)  
JPS ‘Hebrew-English Tanach’, (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. 2000), *along with* Orlinsky, ‘Notes on the New Translation of the Torah’ (1969)  
Robert Alter, ‘The Five Books of Moses’ (2004)  
Commentaries in the ‘Anchor Bible’ series  
Rotherham, The Emphasized Bible (1902)  
The Jerusalem Bible (1966) (also my source for topic headings)  
The New King James Bible (1982)